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January 2014

REN NEWSFLASH

Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fourth issue of **REN NEWSFLASH**!

Highlights in this issue:

- Round-up of REN activities in 2013
- BRS Secretariat launches MEAS photo gallery
- (VCS) – the world's leading voluntary greenhouse gas program against HFC-23

The REN Newsflash, which is circulated monthly, covers REN activities and achievements, highlights of partners' activities as they are available from their respective websites, the compilation of news and activities on combating illegal transboundary movements and border control of waste and chemicals, and news on chemicals/waste related MEA synergies from various sources.

REN ACTIVITIES

Round-up of REN activities in 2013

2013 ended with a sense of achievements for the "Regional Enforcement Network on Chemicals and Waste". It experienced a transition of its management responsibility from UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economy (DTIE) to the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DELC) in April 2013. Despite certain delay of due to the transfer, the project has achieved some tangible achievements in technical assistance, information and intelligence sharing, collaboration with partner organizations, awareness raising and networking..

A series of activities were undertaken including organizing the "Training Workshop/ Seminar on Prevention and Control of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Wastes/E-waste" back to back in Vietnam and China; the re-structure and launch of website of the project, and the re-design and the issuance of the REN newsflash on a monthly basis since October too.

Another important activity is the second annual workshop. With the support from all participating countries and partners, a milestone joint meeting took place in November, which brought three international and regional networks to work together for the first time, addressing the issue of combating illegal transboundary of hazardous wastes and other wastes. The meeting resulted in a roadmap for future cooperation and activities to combat illegal shipments of chemicals and waste in the region. The networks included the Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste (REN), Environmental Network for Optimizing Regulatory Compliance on Illegal Traffic (ENFORCE), and the Asian Network for Prevention and Control of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes. Stakeholders from national environmental authorities, customs, inter-governmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations and the private sectors shared experiences and discussed challenges, which shed light on the roadmap for future cooperation and activities.

Significant development has also been achieved in the cooperation between REN and partners; during the implementation of the Operation DEMETER III, it is for the first time for REN to provide concrete technical support for WCO RILO AP on risk profiling of the suspected illegal waste shipments. Now, REN

UNEP SWEDEN

is also working with RILO AP on setting up a mechanism on waste/chemicals seizures reporting and repatriation monitoring.

Highlights of REN activities in 2013

- The seminar on prevention and control of illegal transboundary movement of wastes/e-waste held in Haiphong, Vietnam (07/2013)
- The training workshop on prevention and control of illegal transboundary movement of wastes/e-waste was held in Sanya, China (08/2013)
- Launch of the newly designed REN Newsflash (10/2013)
- Redesign and launched of REN website (11/2013)
- Close cooperation with RILO AP(DEMETER III)
- The second annual workshop in Bangkok, Thailand (11/2013)
- Engagement of participation of environmental authorities
- Organization of the 14th and the 15th ARPEC meetings (06/2013 and 11/2013)

REN participated in 25th Administrative Meeting of the National Contact Points of the WCO RILO AP

The 25th Administrative Meeting of the National Contact Points of the WCO RILO AP took place on17-19 December 2013, in Da Nang, Vietnam. The meeting was co-organized by Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific and Vietnam Customs, and was attended by 42 participants from 16 countries and 5 international organizations.

This meeting was the annual meeting of RILO AP, which focused on introducing the progress of the annual activities, the results of several joint operations etc.

REN was invited to participate in the meeting. REN introduced the updates on the Basel Convention and ENFORCE; the achievements of the Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste (REN), the current mechanism on the repatriation problem. The potential cooperation area with RILO AP under the framework of REN was also proposed including the seizures reporting and monitoring mechanism.

Partner's Activities

BRS Secretariat launches MEAS photo gallery on Flickr

BRS MEAS is the new photo gallery of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions on Flickr, the latest addition to the conventions' panoply of social media services.

The BRS MEAS collection consists of more than 900 photographic images taken by the Secretariat and organized into 12 thematic Albums covering the 2011 and 2013 conferences of the parties and the 2012 meetings of the POPs Review Committee and Chemical Review Committee *(Click **here** to read more)*.

Major win for the climate as door closes on HFC-23

In a major win for the climate, the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) – the world's leading voluntary greenhouse gas program – has announced it will be turning its back on the super greenhouse gas HFC-23.

The move acknowledges progress under the Montreal Protocol, G20 and other bilateral government discussions on the international regulation of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

HFC-23, a by-product in the production of the chemical HCFC-22 which is primarily used in air-conditioning and refrigeration, is 14,800 times more damaging to the climate than carbon dioxide *(Click **here** to read more)*.

Activities in Combating Illegal Transboundary Movement and Border Control of Waste and Chemicals

Swedish illegal waste exports rife: customs

Swedish customs officials have warned that the country is exporting hazardous electronic waste that risks ending up in developing countries where it could likely cause environmental and health damage.

Swedish customs and border officials stopped 771 tonnes of illegal waste last year. Almost half, 293 tonnes, was found in the southern county of Skåne where the authorities say that one in two transports they intercept contains potentially hazardous materials. *(Click **here** to read more)*

Public want to know where sorted waste goes, study suggests

A majority of Brits (91%) think that their local council should tell them where their carefully sorted waste is sent, according to a new study. The survey by plastic bottle recycler Closed Loop Recycling highlights a growing concern that the public think that waste from their recycling bins are being shipped abroad to be landfilled. A total of 84% of people think that it is a waste of time if recycling ends up in a foreign landfill site. *(Click **here** to read more).*

Energy Commission orders re-exportation of banned fridges

The Energy Commission of Ghana has ordered a British waste management company, EnviroCom, to re-export 57 containers of banned refrigerators it illegally imported into the country within seven days.

The government on January 1, 2013 banned second-hand and inefficient refrigerators which have the ozone depleting gas, chlorofluorocarbons (CFC). Such fridges release into the environment toxic substances such as metal lead, chemicals such as phthalates as well as chlorinated dioxins known to promote cancer. *(Click **here** to read more)*

Lack of info plagues efforts to reduce E-waste

Key gaps in information play an increasingly important role in thwarting efforts at environmental protection -- including the reduction of waste from electronic materials.

The creation of trade codes is necessary to track used electronics products according to a recent study concerning the waste from growing quantities of used electronics devices—including TVs, mobile phones, and computers. *(Click **here** to read more)*

Reminder:

Basel Convention is now inviting Parties and others to comment on the ***Guidance on the implementation of the Basel Convention take-back provision*** no later than **31 January 2014**. Comments are to be sent to the Secretariat at: juliette.kohler@brsmeas.org

For more details, please visit

Website of Basel Convention

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT

http://www.projectren.org/

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